

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTICES.

The Fauna of British India, including Ceylon and Burma. Published under the authority of the Secretary of State for India in Council. Edited by Lt.-Col. C. T. BINGHAM. — *Rhynchota*. Vol. III. (*Heteroptera* — *Homoptera*). By W. L. DISTANT. London: Taylor & Francis. Pp. xiv, 503; text-figs. 266.

COL. BINGHAM has prefixed a preface to this volume (the first published under his editorship) expressing the general regret felt at the death of Dr. Blanford, the originator of the series of works on the Fauna of British India, and noticing the arrangements made for future volumes, comprising works on Coleoptera, Lepidoptera, and Mollusca.

The present volume contains the conclusion (families 17 to 24) of the Heteroptera, chiefly including the not very extensive but extremely interesting Water-Bugs, and the first two families of Homoptera—the Cicadidæ (three subfamilies) and Fulgoridæ (twelve subfamilies). It will thus be seen that the largest, and in the case of the Homoptera the handsomest and most conspicuous, species fall into the present volume. These sections are, however, very poorly represented in Britain. Of the great and vociferous family Cicadidæ we have only a single rare and local representative, and even this one of the smaller species, measuring under 2 inches in expanse, though from 3 to 6 or even 7 inches is no uncommon size in India and other warm countries. Even so, however, our own species is the largest British species of its order, except the curious aquatic *Ranatra* belonging to the Heteroptera. The Water-Bugs and Fulgoridæ are somewhat better represented in Britain, but the latter only by comparatively small and insignificant species, whereas the Indian Fulgoridæ are as large and brightly coloured as butterflies and tiger-moths, which, indeed, some of the species resemble, while others are remarkable for the large and often curiously shaped protuberance on the head, which, however, finds its greatest development not in an Indian species, but in the large South-American lantern-fly, which sometimes measures nearly 6 inches across the wings. It is curious that both the South-American lantern-flies and the East-Indian candle-flies should be reputed luminous, and yet that modern entomologists should not have been able to confirm the statement in either one case or the other.

We hope that the high standard of excellence which the 'Fauna of British India' has exhibited since its commencement will be maintained permanently by the combined efforts of editors, authors, and artists.

A Synonymic Catalogue of Homoptera.—Part I. *Cicadidæ*. By W. L. DISTANT. London: Printed by Order of the Trustees of the British Museum, 1906. 8vo. Pp. 207.

THIS is one of the familiar brown-covered Catalogues that have been so useful to entomologists since the Trustees of the British Museum decided to adopt that form, instead of the long series of publications

in a smaller size with blue paper covers which preceded them. The present Catalogue is devoted to the very interesting family of the Cicadidæ, which includes the largest species of the suborder Homoptera, but which is entirely unrepresented in the British Islands, except by a single rare and local species, found chiefly in the New Forest.

The loud stridulation of many of the foreign species is a great feature of forest life abroad; and even in Greece the Cicada's "song" has been famous from classical times onwards.

Mr. Distant has long been one of the leading authorities on this family, having published a 'Monograph of Oriental Cicadidæ' as long ago as 1889, and having also included it in the third volume on Rhynchota in the 'Fauna of British India,' published during the present year.

The Catalogue before us extends to 188 pages, exclusive of Index, which fills 19 pages in triple columns. The number of genera admitted is 179, and, besides the full synonymy, useful tables are given of the genera in each division.

The enormous increase in entomological literature renders the frequent publication of monographs and catalogues (which are as grammars and dictionaries) indispensable to working entomologists; and we cannot have too many of them, provided they are written by men well up in their subject and are fairly complete and up to date.

Opinions on details differ; but there are three particulars in which we think Mr. Distant's book might have been improved. First, we think that the species under each genus should have been numbered as well as the genera. Secondly, the species contained in the Natural History Museum should have been marked, and all names the types of which are included in the series should have been specially indicated. Thirdly, we find a list of undetermined species at the end of the book; but we should have preferred to see all these, except those absolutely unrecognizably described without figures, assigned to their probable places, if necessary with a query. In the case of Walker's species not in the Museum, the types perhaps still exist in other British collections.

We do not make these remarks as criticisms, but as suggestions, and have no hesitation in recommending Mr. Distant's work as absolutely indispensable to all students of the Cicadidæ.

W. F. K.

MISCELLANEOUS.

Locusts in Hungary.

It is stated in a morning paper to-day that locusts are committing ravages in some parts of Hungary. I should be much obliged to some Hungarian entomologist if he would kindly send me specimens for identification.

W. F. KIRBY.

Natural History Museum,
S. Kensington, London,
July 27, 1906.